FROM WAR CANOE TO BATTLESHIP

Growth of Honolulu Harbor

BY ALBERT P. TAYLOR

Centuries ago when Europeans and Asians fixed the Pillars of Hercules as the most distant points of the great Middle Sea toward which navigators dared cruise in their galley-oared ships, the great Pacific was sailed by fleets of log-hewn vessels of diminutive proportions, craft shaped from single trees felled in the forests of koa and kou upon the slopes of the burning mountains of Mauna Loa, of Mauna Kea, and of the extinct Crater of the Sun.

The navigators of the tiny crafts were guided from island to island by the stars. Across the wind-swept channels of the Hawaiian archipelago these craft, with sails of braided lauhala, sped by night, the steersmen's eyes intent upon the stars and planets, seeking first the north star and the Little Dipper, then the evening star, and, when the light of the latter waned or the planet disappeared, the morning star was fixed upon as the next point of this vast heavenly compass. And so the journey began and ended, the course being held almost as true as though laid by the steady needle of the magnetic compass.

In the dimly understood past centuries of Hawaii's history, the koa outrigger canoe played a great part in uniting the people of the islands into a common people and linking the people of all the Hawaiian group with those upon the islands of the far South Seas. Great fleets of canoes cruised the Hawaiian waters, and, with their aid came the conquest of the group by Kamehameha, the Napoleon of the Pacific, and the earliest development of Honolulu as a commercial center.

Canoes and Gods.

The hewing and launching of the canoe was associated closely with the worship of the gods of ancient Hawaii. The navigator who desired a craft of his own went up into the koa forest and selected a tree, marked the place, blazed a trail and returned to the seashore village, where he sought the builder of canoes. The builder, with great solemnity, went to the heiau (temple) and told the priest that a man of the sea had selected a canoe tree. The priest lay down to sleep, hoping that a dream might come to him which would tell him whether the selected tree was good or bad. Should he dream of a man or a woman standing unclothed, his interpretation was that the tree was defective and the builder should not venture after it into the forest depths. In that case the navigator would tramp the forest again, select a new tree, and the priest would again pray for a dream. If the priest, on the other hand, saw in his dream a man or a woman standing clothed in malo or pa-u, then the tree would be declared proper for a canoe.

Felled With Proper Rites.

The navigator, builder and friends would then made preparations for their journey into the forest, carrying with them a hog, cocoanuts, a red fish and some awa. On arriving at the selected tree, all would sleep after offering sacrifices to the gods. On the following morning the hog was cooked in an imu at the foot of the tree and eaten for breakfast. Then came further elaborate ceremonies. Members of the party would climb the tree to where the first branches forked, and there mark the farther end of the canoe to be.

The priest, taking up a stone adz, then offered it as a sacrifice to many gods, chanting to one of the female gods: "Oh, Lea, Kapuaowalakai, hear ye the adz, for this is the adz which is to shape the canoe." The tree being felled, the people ran and hid, watching for an omen. The birds, startled, winged their way to the fallen forest sovereign and wheeled about the trunk. In breathless silence the watchers waited, for upon the bird's action much depended. Perhaps the bird would alight, skip over the bark and then fly away again through the forest. Then the watchers would breath with relief. If the bird remained and pecked at crevices, their worst fears were realized, for it meant that insects had burrowed homes in the trunk and it would be useless for a sea-craft.

All well, amid silence the priest then passed over the log marking it here and there with his adz, finally looping an ieie vine about a portion of the trunk and offering a final sacrifice to the gods, removed the tabu of silence. Then the builders commenced hewing in earnest, sharpening both ends and measuring length, depth and width. When the interior was roughly dug out and the bottom rounded, a crease was cut in the stern where the rope, by which the canoe was to be drawn to the distant shore, was attached. When everything was in readiness the priest again assumed direction of affairs, crying out: "Oh, Kupulupulu, be thou careful of this canoe, watch over the bow of this canoe, watch over the stern of this canoe, take charge of this canoe until it reaches the seashore."

The people laid hold of the rope and dragged the incomplete craft through the forest, down steep hills, up gulch sides, the bow being carefully defended from sharp rocks by men specially designated for that purpose. Sometimes it took days to reach the shore, and on arrival there the canoe was placed in the "longhouse," where the finishing touches were added and the outriggers adjusted. Then came the final ceremony of launching, when more hogs, cocoanuts, red fish and awa were offered as a sacrifice to the gods. The priest offered a long prayer unique in the catholicity of its requests upon the gods of the elements.

"Listen, thou, to the beauty of the finishing of the canoe," he began; "Oh, god of the canoe, the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the sea, the day, the night; here is the canoe of the Old Woman: Who is the Old Woman? The Old Woman is Pa-pa, wife of Wakea, who hewed it, who gave it drink, who traveled to faraway places, who trespassed and broke a tabu — the tabu against the hewing of the canoe of Wakea. This is the canoe of the Old Woman. Who is the Old Woman? The Old Woman is Lea, wife of Mokuhalii, who hewed the canoe and drank the water, and traveled and trespassed so that the tabu of hewing the canoe ceased. Deal, thou, carefully with this canoe."

The Stars as Guides.

The canoe was then launched upon the waters and the navigator was ready to commence his cruise of the sea and to follow the stars. He set his course by night, picking up the north star (haku hookele wa 'a—canoe navigator) and the morning star, called the "distance star." The Big Dipper and the Little Dipper were reckoned on, but the latter had a twofold meaning, for its Then came the evening star, known to search for schools of deep-water fishes. Then came the evening star, known to them as the "canoe sentinel." When the morning star had risen to a fixed point fishermen swung their canoes about and started back for the land, for it meant that day was approaching. They had a fear also that if they did not turn about their enemy, the swordfish, would attack them. If they saw two fiery eyes apparently coming toward them swiftly on the crest of a wave, they threw themselves face downward in the canoe, for the swordfish would leap and possibly pierce their cheeks or rip their sail. The morning star was called "hoku lea." One of the Hawaiian meles composed by Kinoole describes Venus and the morning star—

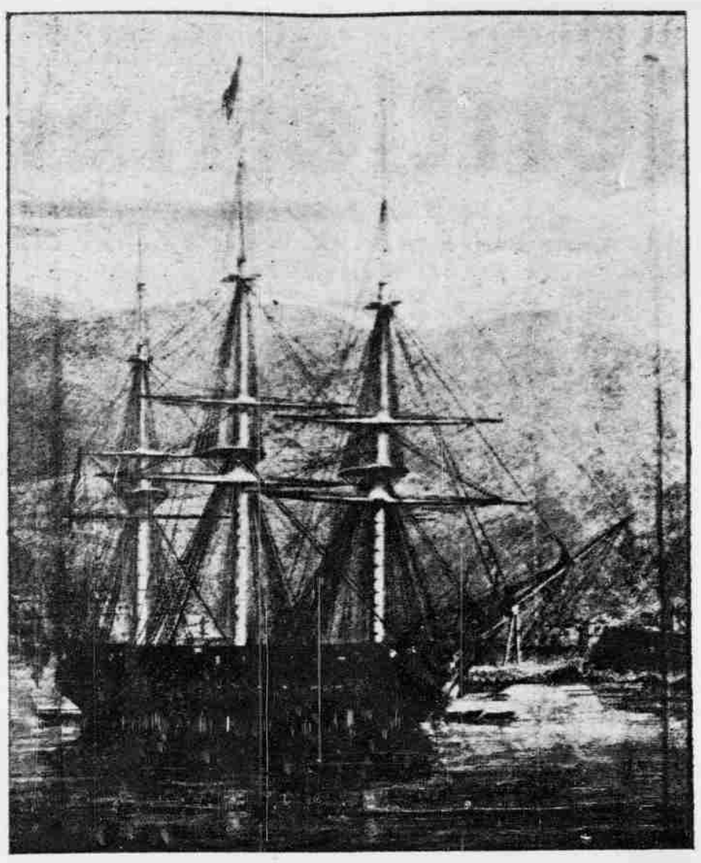
"* * * Burst forth, oh red clouds,
"Expose the eastern point (of Hawaii);
"Disclose the Star of Distance,
"Companion of the Little Satellite."

This was the ceremony of the canoe and of the water, elaborate, but necessary, in those "good old days," when nothing bigger than an outrigger sailed the Hawaiian waters.

Used by Invaders.

And so the fleets of canoes from Maui and Hawaii landed their men upon the shores of Oahu, so that in time Waikiki became the haven of canoes and there sprang up from the village a great town, which in time became the residence of the king. At times thousands of canoes lined the beach, most of them the war craft of the conquering chiefs of other islands. When Kamehameha landed with his great armies, the canoes numbered into the thousands, and were the great double war-canoes stately Frigates of Old.

And so when the first sailing ships of traders came into Hawaiian waters they found safe anchorage off Waikiki.



THE STATELY FRIGATE POTOMAC, WHICH ANCHORED OFF WAIKIKI IN 1833 AND ENTERTAINED THE YOUNG HAWAIIAN KING, KAUIKEAOULI

There, also, the visiting frigates of foreign nations came to anchor and received and entertained aboard the king and his court. It was off Waikiki that the fine American frigate Potomac anchored in July, 1832. Of that visit, J. N. Reynolds, who wrote the history of the Potomac's famous cruise around the world, says of the evening the frigate came to anchor:

"The Potomac finally anchored in twenty-one fathoms of water, about one mile from a reef of coral rocks that stretches across what is called the inner harbor, leaving but a very narrow passage for vessels to enter and depart, and forming a complete natural breakwater to the anchorage within. Abreast of her was the village of Waititi, consisting of a few huts, and two or three cocoanut groves. From this point of view, the island appeared handsomely distributed into valley and hill. No great beauty was visible—no cultivation apparent."

The visit of the Potomac was full of significance to the Islanders, for there were many vexatious public questions under discussion then, some religious, some political, while the air was full of intrigue, with nations endeavoring to gain the upper hand in the control of the affairs of the little kingdom. But the interchange of social amenities placed all other matters on a lesser level. The young king, Keaukeouli, was rowed out to the frigate in the commodore's boat. All military honors were accorded him. As the sea where the ship lay was heavy, the usual accommodation-ladder was not rigged, and the royal visitors had to be hoisted on board by means of the "whip and chair" suspended from the mainyard. The chair being lowered into the boat, a royal lady was placed in it, and at the sound of the boatswain's pipe, she soon swung between heaven and the billows, hoisted up by about fifty of the frigate's sailors, and landed on deck.

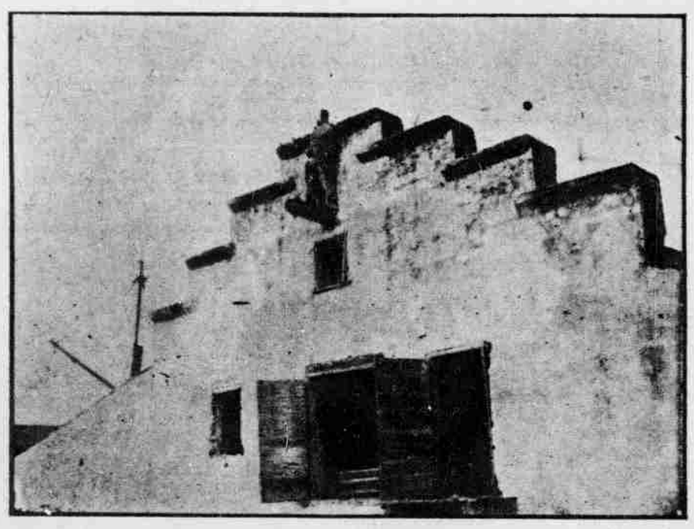
Another warship, a British frigate, came to anchor under the Potomac's stern, and fired a salute of thirteen guns in handsome style, which was returned by the American. The English ship then filled away and stood out to sea. They were beautiful visitors in those days, those great gun-bearers of the nations, and to the Islanders were wonderful craft. As they came up from the western and southern seas, with their stately topmasts of pine bearing flowing sheets, topgallant sails, royals and studding sails spread like wings, their white surface to the breeze, they displayed the power and majesty of their governments. At times a frigate came up when the sea was in a turmoil, the skies overcast and the wind blowing a gale down the channel. Then the Waikiki villagers saw the stately ship passing swiftly by like a huge animal struggling in the elements, now poising on the top of a great wave, now sinking in the trough of the sea, rising and bursting through the crested billows, and dashing the water from her sides as the lion shakes the dewdrops from his mane, and the men of the canoes looked and marveled.

What a prophecy did those sturdy American naval navigators proclaim when the Potomac rode at anchor off Waikiki! The ship's writer, summing up the opinions of Commodore Downes and officers, said:

"These Islands must always be places of interest in the Pacific Ocean, lying, as they do, between the tracks of vessels bound to China and the East Indies, from the coast of California, and the whole of South America. They are also important as places of refreshment for whalers, after their long and hazardous cruise to capture the leviathan of the ocean. All these circumstances tend to render the Sandwich Islands of peculiar interest to the navigator of the Pacific. What would the laborious whaleman do, after toiling five or six long months upon the boisterous Japan Sea, in his daring pursuit, fatigued, and out of fresh provisions, had he to toil his way to the coast of South America for refreshments and necessaries?

"At the Sandwich Islands they muster in numbers, and find wherewith to refit them once more for the dangers of their hazardous profession. Here, too, the northwest trader, after toiling and chasing the otter and seal on the bleak coast of America, finds a pleasant retreat for the winter months, near at hand. Vessels bound across the Pacific, now a track so common, can often find the means to repair the disasters of the seas, without being compelled to put back, perhaps thousands of miles, or prosecute a voyage rendered dangerous by unforseen events. During a war, what interest would not these Islands hold out to us, as sources of refreshment for our men-of-war, while protecting our commerce, whaling, and other interests in these seas?"

Did Commodore Downes have a vision of the future great naval base at Pearl Harbor, now being built and fortified, to be ready to challenge the world in 1912?



THE BATTERED FIGUREHEAD OF THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON KEEPS WATCH OVER THE BUSY HARBOR.

Whalers Came to Winter.

Whalers found Honolulu a harbor of refuge when Arctic blizzards drove them southward; a place where tradesmen could refit their ships and supply their necessities in the way of food, and where stores of oil could be landed and sent back to New England in trading clippers. New England shipping ports were the starting points of many vessels which became widely known as carriers of the first missionaries and the gospel to the natives of the Sandwich Islands, as they were then designated.

Goods were first landed at Waikiki and later discharged at Honolulu proper. At first there were no wharves and boats came to the beach from the anchored vessels, depositing the goods upon the sand. A breach was made in the coral reef-guard at the entrance of the channel and vessels were worked into the harbor in a unique manner. It was no easy task for ships to enter the port, for there were no towing steamers in those early days. A long hawser had to be sent ashore and dozens of natives, great, strong men, took a grip upon it and pulled. Bullocks were also employed to aid the towing process.

The first ship to come into the harbor was the schooner Jackal which in 1794 was the first to drop anchor in the stream. Within a year of the great invasion of Oahu by Kamehameha and a few months after Vancouver had anchored off Waikiki Bay the entrance into the inner harbor was discovered by Captain Brown of the Jackal. With the entry of the first schooner Honolulu became recognized as a shipping headquarters and between December 1, 1817, and September 20, 1818, the arrival and sailing of thirty-eight ships at Honolulu harbor was noted in the journal of James Hunnewell, one of the first foreigners to open a trading store in Honolulu.

Honolulu Harbor Crowded.

Honolulu harbor became well known, although for many years Lahaina was the chief port in the Islands. As the whaling industry in the Pacific seas became greater, more vessels came here for refitting and there would be half a dozen whalers in port at a time, then a score, some times fifty and sixty, and at one time it is said about a hundred ships were in these waters. Their crews were hardy, happy-go-lucky venturesome men of the sea. With hundreds of whaleman in port at the same time the town shuddered, for their ways were rough, and at times there were riots, for even in those days the liquor question was an important topic of public and official consideration.

Warships became more frequent in these waters and the Islands assumed greater importance from a strategic standpoint and but for the policy of the American Republic, proclaimed by Daniel Webster, warning other nations to keep their hands off, a flag other than that of the United States might have flown over these Islands decades ago, and annexation, as known to Americans, would never have been a question to consider at all.

Steam Replaced Sails.

Wooden frigates gave way to steam warships and the clipper boats which made fast runs from San Francisco to Honolulu—the only passenger carriers in those days—were given a setback when paddle-wheel liners were dispatched from San Francisco for this port.

In the '60s the steamers began to ply the largest vessel, that would ever enter the harbor, had been built.

The Hawaiian government deepened the harbor, dredged out a channel and lowered the bar at the entrance thereto, established a lighthouse there and one at Diamond Head, Honolulu entering upon her career as a future commercial port, soon to have world importance. The passenger liners increased in size, and today the best type of vessels for this trade is represented in such liners as the Mongolia and Chiyo Maru, palatial ocean travelers.

In Washington, officials of the war and navy departments and congressmen are watching the Hawaiian Islands, and sending vast sums of money to make the harbor deeper and bigger and the channel wider and deeper, and flanking the coast with the most advanced type of lights to guide mariners—a vast difference between the days of the star-guided Hawaiian, and the compass and lighthouse guided navigator of modern times.

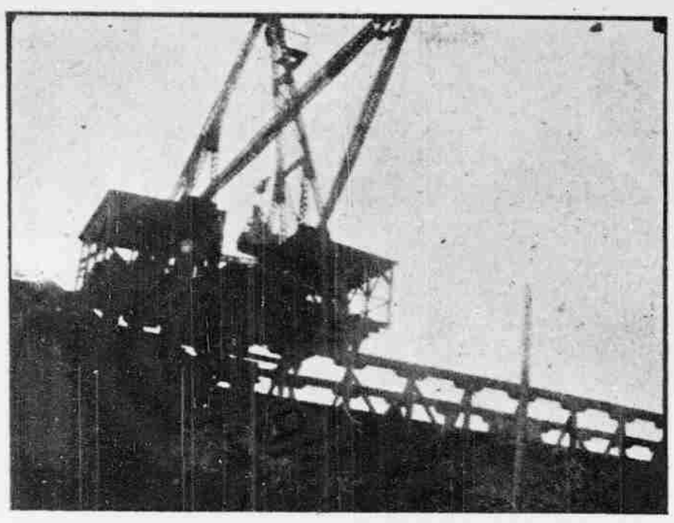
Down on Honolulu's waterfront, where dust from great coal piles fill the air and the hum of machinery, the creaking of whips and the puffing of engines denote industry, may be found today the latest machinery and aids in coaling steamers and discharging cargoes from their capacious holds. The latest advance is the great coal-hopper near the naval station, where steel towers loom high above the ground, far above an elevated railroad, where a huge crane hoists great clamshell buckets filled with coal, deposits the load in cars, which are worked along the elevated road to discharge their loads into chutes which lead into a ship's bunkers. Cost something? Yes, thousands upon thousands of dollars, but a saver of thousands.

The old wooden warhsips of the Potomac class have given way to the great armored cruisers of the type of the American cruiser Tennessee, the British fighter Bedford, the war-scarred warship Idzumo of the Japanese navy, the gray-clad Calabria of Italy, and the trim, saucy little Arcona of the Kaiser's fleets. They find, not an anchorage in the harbor, but moorings alongside wharves as fine as those in New York and San Francisco.

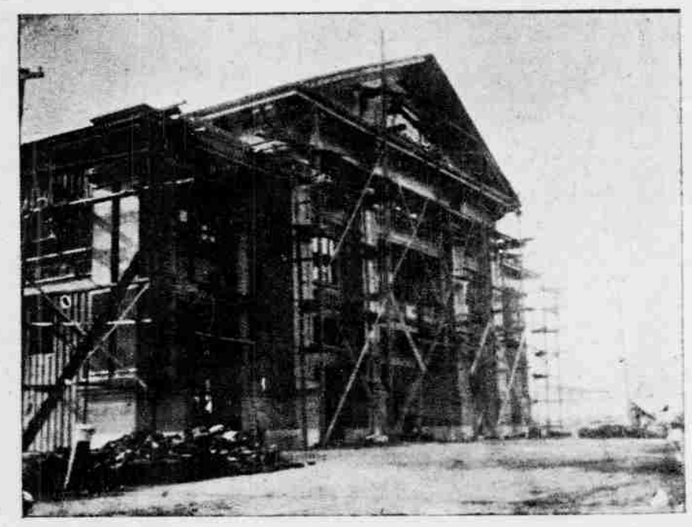
But to Honolulans a warship is a warship, whether wooden frigate or paddle-wheel cruiser or modern steel battleship. To the womanhood of Honolulu the decks of a warship were made to dance upon and a place for flirting with brass-buttoned and gold-laced officers, formerly for the king to visit and be received with royal salutes, and always to be the center of social activity.

The Ewa end of the great harbor now teems with huge, bulky-looking steam freighters, which have almost crowded the oldtime but graceful-looking windjammer out of the trading between the Islands and ports in other parts of the world. Masts and sails have given way to engines and deck derricks. The smaller holds of the sailing vessels have been replaced by the vast cargo spaces of the great steamers which carry from eight to twelve thousand tons as against the thousand to two thousand tons of the graceful sailers. The development of the harbor of Honolulu has been gradual and steady, and has elevated the port to one of the most prominent in the Pacific, and is a source of a better percentage of income to the United States government than almost any other on its list.

Almost ready for opening is the new Alakea wharf, whose shed looms up a most imposing structure, whose front



FAR ABOVE THE STREET THE GIANT STEAM COAL HOPPER MARKS THE MOST MODERN ADVANCE ALONG THE WATERFRONT.



HONOLULU'S NEW WHARF SHED FOR THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE LARGEST PACIFIC LINERS.

across the Pacific Ocean and Hawaii was brought closer to the American continent. The harbor was given attention and enlarged and wharves built to accord with the new dignity of the Pacific metropolis. When the steamer China was dispatched to Honolulu she was regarded almost as wonderful as the present-day Mauretania is to the Atlantic seaboard. Honolulans thought discloses portals and balconies of pleasing architectural lines comparing most favorably with those of Atlantic and other Pacific ports. Nearby are the old and wornout wharves of an earlier generation. They were once considered large and commodious, and even kings and queens trod their planks when they boarded the little island steamers to visit remoter parts of their kingdom; when music was played and everyone wore leis. Now these discarded wharves, some time to give way to newer structures, are littered with junk and the remains of old boats and engines and boilers.

For years these changing scenes have been regarded by the deteriorating eyes of an ancient wooden figurehead, which has adorned the pulley-beam of an old building in the lumber yard of Allen & Robinson. Now the head is almost gone, and parts of a leg have disappeared, but nearly a century ago, or maybe it was more, that figurehead adorned the bow of a gallant sailing ship which left an English port for these Islands and was wrecked upon the shores of Molokai. The figurehead was brought to Honolulu, and when the squat coral building was erected there, fifty or sixty years ago, the figurehead was elevated to its present position. It was the figure of a lord mayor of London, and the ship was

(Continued on Page Twelve.)